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S E R M O N

A PREACHED

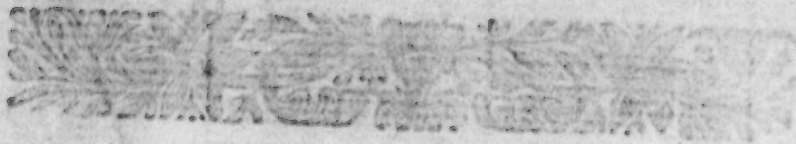
On SUNDAY, *February* II. 17³²/₃₃.

IN THE

Parish-Church of *Gravesend*.

Price Four-Pence.

9E/00779



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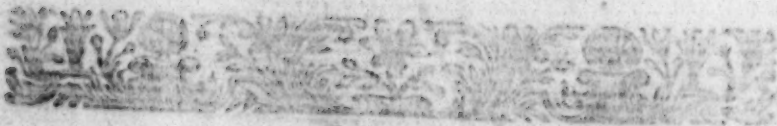
SERMON

PREACHED

ON SUNDAY MORNING JULY 17th



Parish-Church of Great St. Martin.



Price Four-Pence

The Duty of Gratitude to God and Man.

A

18.

SERMON

PREACHED

On SUNDAY, *February* II. 17³²/₃₃.

IN THE

PARISH-CHURCH

OF

GRAVESEND,

Destroyed by Fire in the Year 1727,

And since Rebuilt by Act of Parliament.

By *THOMAS HARRIS*, M. A.
Rector of the said CHURCH.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the Oxford-
Arms in Warwick-Lane. MDCCXXXIII.

The Duty of Gratitude to God and Man.

A



IN THE

PARISH CHURCH



Discarded from the
Reference Division

Destroyed by fire in the
And since Republic of
to

By THOMAS HARRIS, M.A.
Rector of the said Church

LONDON:

Printed for J. Roberts, near the Oxford-
Street in Warwick-Lane. MDCCLXXII.



TO HIS GRACE

LIONEL

Duke and Earl of *Dorset*,

Earl of *Middlesex*, Baron *Buckhurst*
and Baron *Cranfield*, Lord Lieutenant
of *Ireland*, one of His Majesty's
most Honourable Privy-Council,
and Knight of the most Noble
Order of the Garter, &c.

May it please your GRACE,



O accept of the following
Discourse, as a Testimony
of my sincere Gratitude,
and the only Return it
was in my Power to make,
for the many and repeated Instances
of

DEDICATION.

of your Compassion and Concern towards the unhappy Sufferers by Fire at GRAVESEND.

THAT Noble Example you were pleas'd to give of private Bounty, and the procuring the Brief to be laid in the most extensive manner; that effectual Recommendation of our Calamity to their present Majesties; that truly Royal Benefaction which through your Hands was conveyed to us; and that Countenance, Encouragement and Assistance which the Act for Rebuilding our Church receiv'd from your Lordship: These are Obligations, which as we can never forget, so I hope we shall always acknowledge with the utmost Gratitude.

MAY the Goodness which you have shewed to the distress'd Inhabitants of this Place, engage the same good Providence, (which of late so signally appeared in preserving you from the
very

DEDICATION.

very Brink of Destruction, and *delivering you from so great a Death*) at all times continue to guard, protect and preserve you, and bless your *going out* and your *coming in*; may you in this World be rewarded with Health, Peace and Prosperity, and in the World to come with eternal Happiness and Glory, is the earnest and sincere Prayer of,

Your GRACE'S

Most Obliged, and

Most Devoted,

Humble Servant,

Thomas Harris.

DEDICATION

very Birk of Destruction, and all-
tering you from a great a Dearth as
all times continue to guard, protect
and preserve you, and bless your going
out and your coming in; may you in
this World be rewarded with Health,
Peace and Prosperity, and in the
World to come with eternal Happiness
and Glory, is the earnest and sincere

Prayer of

Yours Grace's

Most Obedient and

Most Devoted

and Affectionate Son

Thomas Harris

to

His Grace

the Lord Bishop of

Exeter

in

the County of Devon

England

the 10th of

the Month of

the Year 1711

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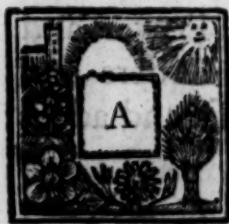


PSALM cxviii. 18, 19, 20.

*The Lord hath chastened me sore, but
he hath not given me over unto death.*

*Open to me the gates of righteousness:
I will go into them, and I will
praise the Lord.*

*This is the gate of the Lord into which
the righteous shall enter.*



As there is no Author, and no Title prefixed to this Psalm, so it is difficult to tell either upon what Occasion, or by whom it was wrote; but as the Matter of it does for the most part agree with the Person and History of *David*, so it is generally allowed by Interpreters to have been a Psalm of *David*, and to have been composed and sung upon some grand Solemnity; such as his being advanced to the Kingdom of *Israel*,

B

rael,

2 *The Duty of Gratitude*

rael, or his Conquest over the *Philistines*, or his bringing the Ark of God, and fixing it at *Jerusalem*. (Not but that there are in this Psalm, especially towards the latter End, some things which seem to be utter'd by way of Prophecy, and to carry along with them a typical Description of the future Exaltation and glorious Triumph of the Messiah over all his Enemies.)

BUT whoever was the Author, and whatever the primary Occasion and Design of this Psalm, thus much appears from the Psalm it self, that the Author of it had been subject to very great Persecutions, Afflictions, and Dangers; that the Lord, in whom he trusted, had not suffer'd those Persecutions to prevail against him, had turned his Afflictions into Joy, and dissipated and dispelled all his Dangers: From whence he proceeds to mention and enlarge upon the Obligations he was under, of making great, publick and solemn Acknowledgments of the divine Power and Goodness, and to call upon all Orders and Degrees of Men to praise, magnify and adore the God of his Salvation.

THE Words of my Text are, as it were, an Epitome of the whole Psalm, and therefore well deserve a more especial Consideration.

THE *Lord hath chastened me sore*. The word *Chastened* is twice mention'd in the *Hebrew*, which is always a Token of a very intense

tense and emphatical Signification. Thus God tells *Abraham*, *In blessing, I will bless thee; and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed.* And so likewise he tells *Moses*, *Seeing I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt.** The Psalmist therefore by saying, *Chastening the Lord hath chastened me*, means that the Lord had laid him under a very sore and grievous Chastisement.

BUT *he hath not given me over unto death.* Though the Lord had brought him into so great Trouble and Adversity, yet he did not do it by way of Reprobation, but Correction; he did not suffer him to be overcome and destroyed; he supported and preserved him in the midst of his Calamity; he conquered and subdued all his Enemies; he made all Opposition to cease, and all his Dangers to flee before him.

FOR these Reasons the holy Psalmist cries out, as it were, in an Extasy of Joy, *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord.* By the *gates of righteousness* are meant, as appears from the following Verse, the Gates of the Tabernacle, or the House of God; and they are here called, *the Gates of Righteousness*, either because the Righteous enter therein, or because by entering therein Men become righteous; or rather, because the righteous

B 2

Lord

* *Our Translation renders the Words, I have surely seen; but in the Hebrew the Verb is twice mention'd.*

4 *The Duty of Gratitude*

Lord does, in a more especial manner, dwell and delight to be worshipped therein.

THE Reason why the Psalmist desired to have the Gates of Righteousness opened, and to enter therein, was, that he might *praise the Lord*; that is, that in that Place where the Lord God did chuse, out of all their Tribes, to put his Name there, he might, in the most publick, solemn and acceptable Manner, return his most devout Thanks and Praises unto God, for that wonderful and gracious Deliverance which the Lord had wrought for him.

As to the Words which follow, *This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter*; it is to be observed, that Interpreters have looked upon this Psalm as composed for different Persons, speaking to, and answering each other with a suitable Variety of Parts. If therefore we suppose *David*, or whoever else was the Author of this Psalm, coming to the Gate of the Court of the Tabernacle, and saying, *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord*; how natural and elegant will the Answer be in the following Words: if supposed to be uttered by the Priests and Levites that waited for this Procession at the Door of the Court of the Tabernacle, *This is the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter*. That is, Do you seek to have the Gates of Righteousness opened, and to enter

enter therein? This is the Gate of the Lord's House, this is the Court of Audience to the King of Heaven, this is the House of Prayer to all People: Come, ye Righteous, enter herein, and render your Praises and Thanksgivings in the most acceptable manner to the Throne of Grace.

HAVING thus endeavour'd to set the Words of my Text in a true Light, and to give you the Sense and Meaning of them; the present Occasion will naturally lead you to the Design and Intent with which I chose them.

WHEN we call to mind the dismal Calamity that a few Years since befel us; when we consider how unexpectedly it arose, how fast it gathered Strength, with what Progress it advanced, and what Desolation it carried along with it; how in a few Hours Space it destroyed our Wealth and Possessions, and the Means and Effects of our Industry: When we remember the sudden Alteration that one Night made in the Condition and Fortunes of our Neighbours and Friends, driving out many of them naked and destitute, depriving them in an Instant of their Habitations and Employments, and leaving them utterly at a loss to know how to provide for their daily Necessities, or where to *lay their Heads*: More especially when we consider the Desolation and Destruction that at the same time, and by the same Means, befel the House of
God;

God; that at that very Juncture, when we stood most in need of assembling ourselves together, and of confessing and bewailing our Iniquities, and of vowing a better Obedience for the time to come, and of hearing God speak to us in his Word, and by his Ministers; that at that very Juncture, I say, we were deprived of these external Means both of Repentance and Consolation: When we remember and consider these things, how justly may we apply to ourselves the Words of the Psalmist, *In chastening the Lord hath chastened me; or, the Lord hath chastened me sore.*

BUT then the Words which follow are no less applicable to our State and Condition than the former; and we can with equal Justice and Propriety say, *But he hath not given me over unto death.* We can truly say, that he hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities; that he hath corrected us, but not in his Anger, since in the midst of Judgment he hath remember'd Mercy. Though the Flames were fierce and dreadful, yet he did not overthrow us, as he did the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, nor make us a standing Memorial of his Wrath to all succeeding Ages: But, as a most tender and compassionate Father, he had mercy on us; and as soon as he saw our Adversity, he was moved to pity and commiserate our Distress. Many were the Hearts and Hands that he then opened; many and
gracious

gracious were the refreshing Showers that he then poured down upon our Heads; and by the speedy and liberal Contributions that were then raised, were the immediate and urgent Necessities of many poor Sufferers supplied, and they in a great measure preserved from Hunger, Cold and Nakedness, Evils which after so deplorable a Calamity seemed almost unavoidable. Persons of the highest Rank, and in the most eminent Stations, did not think it beneath their Dignity to take pity of us, to bestow to the Relief of our Necessities out of their Abundance; and by their Example, Authority and Interest, to excite and promote the like generous Dispositions in others. And what greater Comfort or Consolation under so sore a Calamity could we wish for or desire, than to have our present most Gracious Sovereign, and his Illustrious Consort, touch'd with a lively Sense of our Miseries and Misfortunes, and their Hearts overflowing in Streams of Pity and Compassion, of Bounty and Liberality towards us; thereby satisfying the empty Soul, and filling the hungry Soul with Goodness; and in their Persons verifying what the Prophet *Isaiab* had long before uttered concerning the Church in its most flourishing Estate, *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers.** IT

* His present Majesty gave to the poor Sufferers 1000l. and the Queen 500l. to be distributed by the Direction of his Grace the Duke of Dorset.

IT is little more than five Years since this fore Calamity befel us; and behold, the Lord hath turned again the Captivity of our *Zion*; behold, it is risen again out of its Ruins with new Life and Beauty, the Streets are again fill'd with Inhabitants, and the very Marks of Desolation which the Flames left behind are now almost vanished and gone.

AND that which to us appeared the greatest and the most irrecoverable Loss, what we lamented as the most desperate Calamity, is now, beyond the utmost of our Expectations, restored to us; and this House of God (which till of late remained as a sad Witness and lasting Monument of that Night's Destruction) is now raised up again; it is raised up again, not as the latter Temple of the *Jews*, inferior in Glory to the former Temple, but with a far superior Degree of Strength and Ornament.

WHEN we consider the Discouragements with which this great Work was at first undertaken, the Disappointments it met with, the Opposition that was raised against it, the Delays it underwent, the Dangers to which it was exposed, and the Pains and Difficulty with which the Decree was at last obtained, we must, in the Words of the Psalmist, be forced to acknowledge, that *this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

SINCE

SINCE therefore God, though he *bath chastened us sore*, yet he *bath not given us over unto death*; how naturally should these things lead us to the following Part of my Text, and make us say with the Psalmist, *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord.* For if God be to be honoured by us in all our Actions; if it be our Duty in every thing to give thanks, how much more is he to be honoured by us; how much greater Obligations are we under to render our Thanks unto him, upon our receiving such great Mercies, and upon such signal Interpositions of Providence on our behalf? How indispensibly are we obliged to praise and magnify his Name, and to shew forth and proclaim his Glory, by the most lively Acknowledgments, by the highest Expressions of Gratitude, and the most publick Praises and Thanksgivings? For Blessings, especially publick Blessings, call for publick Acknowledgments; they call for such Expressions and Declarations of Gratitude and Praise, as bear some Proportion to the Blessing itself; as are able to inform and convince the World of our being duly sensible, both of the Value of the Blessing itself, and of the Hand from which we received it. All the Return that we weak and dependant Creatures are able to make to the Supreme Lord and Disposer of all things, is Gratitude; and therefore, as it is our All, so we

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ought to offer it up in the most sincere, in the most publick, and in the most acceptable Manner; especially if we consider, that when this Duty is performed with a truly sincere Mind and devout Affection, it is in the Sight of God of great Price.

WHEN *Noah* came out of the Ark, and in a grateful Sense of that wonderful Care and Protection of the Divine Providence, by which he and his Family were preserved from Destruction, built an Altar unto the Lord, and offered Burnt-offerings on the Altar, we read, that *the Lord smelled a sweet savour*, and said, *I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake; neither will I again smite any more every thing living as I have done.*

WHAT shall I render, saith the holy Psalmist, unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord --- I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem: Praise the Lord. --- And again, I will praise the name of the Lord with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving: this shall please the Lord better than a bullock than bath horns and hoofs.*

AND what is still a farther Motive and Inducement to us to enter herein, and to praise the Lord, is, that this *House of God*, this
Gate

Gate of Heaven, is itself so great an Instance of the Divine Goodness and Compassion. Where therefore can the Righteous more properly enter and praise the Lord, than in that very Place, which, besides the End for which it was intended, carries along with it so strong and lively an Argument of the Mercy and Goodness of God towards us, of which should we in this Place be silent, the very *Stones* would immediately cry out against us?

WHEN *David* brought up the Ark of God out of the House of *Obed-edom*, and fixed it at *Jerusalem*, then on that Day he delivered a Psalm, to thank the Lord, into the Hand of *Asaph* and his Brethren; in which he exhorts the People, *to give thanks unto the Lord*, and *to call upon his name*; *to make known his deeds among the people*; *to sing unto him*; *to sing psalms unto him*; *to talk of all his wondrous works*; *to glory in his name*, and *to let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord*; *to seek the Lord and his strength*; *to seek his face continually*; *to remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth*. When the Priests and Levites brought up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord into the Temple that *Solomon* had built, and had placed it in the Oracle of the House, in the most holy Place, then the Trumpeters and Singers were as one, making one Sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, saying, *For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

LET us therefore say with the Psalmist, *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, because his mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever: Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever: Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*

AND let not the Righteous only now, but for all the succeeding Part of their Lives, be diligent and constant in their entering herein, and praising God: Let the Sense they have had of the Want of so inestimable a Privilege, make them shew a still greater Value and Regard for it; and now that God has in so remarkable a manner vouchsafed to draw nigh unto them, let them likewise be careful to draw nigh unto him: Let them draw nigh unto him by a constant and devout Attendance on his holy Ordinances, by improving still more and more under these Means of Grace, by the Purity of their Hearts, and the Holiness of their Lives. And let them more especially beware, how at any time they suffer the Sense of these manifold and great Mercies to depart out of their Hearts all the Days of their Life; or how, with the ungrateful Israelites, *they soon forget his works; they forget God their Saviour, who hath done such great things for them:* but let the Impression that these things make, be deep and lasting; let them not only remember them themselves, but *teach them their sons, and their sons sons.*

LET them be often saying to themselves, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies - - - The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy: He will not alway chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever: He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; for as the heaven is above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.*

AND as these Blessings did not proceed immediately from Heaven, but were derived to us by the intermediate Assistance of second Causes; so it is most just and equitable, that all due Acknowledgment and Honour should be paid to those Persons, whom God, the supreme Director and Disposer of all Events, employed as his Instruments in conveying his Blessings to us. For though there are some Duties that God challenges and appropriates to himself, as his own peculiar Right and Prerogative; yet there are other Duties in which he is pleas'd to suffer his Creatures to partake together with himself; nay, he expects that our Gratitude should always return to him by the same Channel through which the Blessing came; and on all such Occasions, he looks
upon

upon the Honour done to his subordinate Agents, as done *not to Men, but to God.*

AND here, though it would be endless to enumerate all those whose Hearts God inclined, and whose Hands he enabled to encourage, promote, and perfect so good a Work; and who, in an Age so overrun with Infidelity and Profaneness, and wherein a Neglect and Contempt of every thing serious and sacred so much abounds, were not ashamed to appear on the behalf of Religion, and to stand up for the Support of publick Worship; yet some there are that more especially deserve our Notice, and who are justly entitled to all the Respect and Honour that Gratitude can bestow.

THE Royal Assent so freely and readily granted, for Leave to form a Decree; and whereby that Decree, after it was formed, was ratified and established, is to us, among many others, a fresh and lively Instance of the Affection of His most Sacred Majesty towards our Church and Nation, of His Care to support the Protestant Religion, and of His Zeal and Resolution to uphold and defend the Religious, as well as the Civil Rights of his Subjects.

IT will be needless for me to inform you, what most Noble Peer it is to whom we are on this, as well as on many other Accounts, under great Obligations of Gratitude; who has for many Years, and by many extraordinary Acts of Condescension and Favour, endeared

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deared himself to us, and merited all the Acknowledgments and Returns that we are able to render or express; whose Freedom of Access at all times, and on all Occasions; whose Candor and Humanity upon all Applications, whose generous Contribution to the Necessities of our poor Sufferers, and whose good Offices with regard to the Brief, the Royal Bounty, and the rebuilding of this House; as they exceed the utmost of our Acknowledgments, so we should be utterly unworthy of them, should not we remember them at all times, and in all Places, with all Thankfulness.

It looks like an especial Designation of Heaven, that, when the Attempt of procuring a Decree was first engaged in, and the Success greatly depended upon the Character and Conduct of the Person to whose Care and Direction it was to be committed, we should be obliged to apply ourselves to such an one, as our fondest Wishes could hardly have formed. A Person whose unfeigned Piety prompts him to undertake and promote every thing that tends to the Honour of God, and Interest of Religion; whose unwearied Diligence makes him spare no Pains to perfect and accomplish what he has once undertaken; and whose Faithfulness and Integrity, as it needs no Support, so it is superior to all Temptation. *

NEITHER

* Sir Roger Meredith, Bart. Member for the County of Kent.

16 *The Duty of Gratitude, &c.*

NEITHER must we here omit a grateful Remembrance of those Persons, who were appointed by Authority, and entrusted with the Execution of this Decree; to whose Skill and Experience in all Kinds of useful Knowledge we are greatly indebted; who faithfully discharged the Trust reposed in them; under whose Care and Direction the Work of the Lord prospered in our Hands, and by whom it is at length brought to this Degree of Perfection and Ornament.

MAY the Memory of all these Persons endure as long as this Fabrick stands, and together with it be transmitted down to the latest Generations; and may Almighty God, who in his Word hath promised, that *them that honour him, he will honour*, recompense all those that have any ways concurred in beginning, promoting and accomplishing so good a Work, an hundred-fold; may he in this World bless them with Health, Peace and Prosperity; may he adorn their Minds with all the Virtues of the Christian Religion; may he fill their Hearts with all the Fruits of his Holy Spirit, and in the next World may he reward them with eternal Happiness and Glory. *Now, &c.*

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